533

that the whole system of *ga nak*, the general term for the thing becomes an elaborate vehicle of light and shade. It brings the notes of a melody, as surely as the various light and shade of a picture brings the contours of the face, from the flat into the round; which again is precisely what harmony does for them, by assigning to the successive notes varying degrees of consonance. There is an obvious reason for grace-notes wherever there is no harmony. For a melody is a sentence with important words and unimportant, and grace-notes and harmonic texture are the only two things that can always be applied to enhance this importance. For stress and quantity, which serve this purpose in verse, are not so well adapted to music. Stress, which is additional volume, is difficult to achieve with low notes; and quantity, which is additional duration, alters the melody itself, imposing on it from without something which should come from within."

533
101

Although Burmese 'grace' may not be so elaborate or systematised as the Indian *gamak*, much of the above quotation equally applies to Burmese music. Much will have to be pointed out in notation when I deal with the problem of the 'writing' of Burmese music[1]. Mr. Mariano concluded: "It is a matter for great regret that the beautiful music which the Burmans unquestionably possess is being forgotten. The modern tendency is to imitate European and Indian themes, and the time is not distant when genuine Burmese music will be a thing of the past."

533
178

He wrote that 40 years ago. Nowadays, the gramophone record business has encouraged wholesale filching of jazz tunes, first divested of harmony and then re-dressed in an imitation of it, with Burmese words making ungainly efforts to step along side by side with the wholly unsuitable western tunes. Shades of Mariano!

It is a matter for rejoicing that a state school of fine-arts has come into being. How much more rejoicing there would be in the hearts of lovers of true Burmese music if the government, instead of merely opening a class for teaching how to play certain musical instruments, had seized upon the means of saving real Burmese music from oblivion. The implacability of business so far as gramophone records are concerned, the rapid deterioration of public taste pandered to by radio and gramophone, the invasion

[207]
[296]

1. A full treatment of Burmese grace with classified examples in staff-notation will require a separate chapter in the manner of the chapter on Ornamentation in Arnold Dolmetsch's *Interpretation of the music of 17th and 18th centuries*. For the present see specimens in the complete violin part of *Bow-la*.